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## EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

## Multiculturalism and Pedagogical Eclecticism: Towards a Paradigm Shift in Zimbabwean Music Education.

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper looks at the curriculum of music education in Zimbabwe and the approaches to the teaching of music. It begins with the historical background of Zimbabwean musical traditions of both the Shona and Ndebele people and how this music practice has been passed on from generation to generation. A case study approach is taken to reveal the extent to which students are exposed to music literature using a variety of methods. Four primary schools in both urban and rural settings are selected to ascertain the extent to which musical education prevails in these schools. The study reveals that the teaching of music skills is still lacking in Zimbabwe's primary schools. Ways of improving the teaching of music, music literacy and pedagogical principles used in schools are suggested. Conclusions drawn refer to music education curriculum as a paradigm which requires re-designing to include the production of music literacy in the school system.*

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### Historical Background

Zimbabwean music education curriculum has struggled to produce and advance music literacy through the school system. The reasons behind this phenomenon are embedded in Zimbabwe's historical past. According to Matsika (2000), Zimbabwe has experienced three phases of political existence: (1) pre-colonial, (11) colonial and (111) post-colonial. The first phase saw pre-colonial Africans passing their musical traditions from generation to generation through oral and aural transmission (Wade, 2004). There was music for every occasion, including children's game songs (Kreutzer, 2001), ceremonial music (Kwaramba, 1997), work music (Nketia, 1978) and social music (Turino, 2000).

The second phase was the colonial era, which subjected indigenous people to all forms of hardships. The arrival of a foreign and aggressive culture disrupted and decimated the social status quo of the local ethnic groups. Matsika (2000, p.4) points out rather sarcastically that,

... the British colonialists, in their wisdom, came and destroyed this flourishing civilization. They instituted schools where the curriculum had nothing to do with the African way of life.

The British type of education, as lamented by Matsika (2000), did not support local traditional culture. Instead traditional music was relegated to doldrums. Matsika (2000) echoed the observations by Mungazi (1991, p. 742). Once the colonial administration had been established by the British South Africa Company in 1890. The missionaries and government cooperated in providing education to African and European students through a division of labour in which the government was concerned with settler

education and the missionaries with African education. What worsened the government and the missions' educational efforts was that they had conflicting educational targets. The government wanted to educate the Africans for labour and industrial work and the missionaries wanted to "civilize" and convert Africans to Christianity. While in this process of education, missionaries discouraged traditional musical practices. Berliner (1978, p. 25) commented that,

...they imposed religious and aesthetic values on Africans and condemned traditional forms of expressive culture, including music.

Kwaramba (1997) agrees by saying that missionaries branded local traditional musical practices as satanic and heathen. Had the government and missions worked together for the general improvement of all, local traditional musical practices would have developed to a higher literary level.

During the post-colonial era, from independence to current times, the government adopted a conciliatory philosophy and policy. Mudzingwa (1997) mentions that the government introduced an integrating policy, thus reviving the hitherto neglected African languages and other cultural institutions in order to resuscitate the traditional way of life. Despite this integrating approach, Western musical content is still dominant in the curriculum. The system is still maintaining a status quo ante regarding music education.

According to Mutepe, Mpofu and Chataika (2007, p.342). "There is no specific legislation for inclusive education in Zimbabwe." McLaren (2001) lamented that the lack of teachers trained to teach the performing arts is a hindrance to achieving a cultural based music curriculum. This situation is worsened by the attitudes of the indigenous people who, through years of indoctrination, and religious brainwashing perceive their culture as inferior; hence they look down upon traditional music including, dance and language.

With the colonial legacy of conflicting educational approaches between the then government and missionaries, the new African government inherited a divided educational system. Axelsson (1973) led a music teacher preparation programme at Kwanongoma College of Music with an African music innovation; however, Western music still retained a large part of the curriculum. The current curriculum is modelled after the British system of the colonial time. Strumpf (2001) observed that the syllabus required students to take examinations equivalent to grade 3 of the, Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM). The ABRSM syllabus contains nothing of Zimbabwean traditional music as part of its content. Kreutzer (2001) notes that Zimbabwe is a land-locked country, divided into ten political provinces. Found among the many ethnic groups are different music styles identifiable by their dance movements, drumming and song forms. Baird (2006) lists instruments such as the *mbira*, string bows, drums, and several others from the different provinces. Every ethnic group has its own key instrument: drums among the *Karanga*, *mbira* within the *Zezuru*, *rupadza* of the *Manyika* and several others.

Various indigenous styles are listed in the Primary School Syllabus (1989), such as *mafuiwe* of the *Korekore* people of *Mashonaland Central Province*; *jekunje* of the *Manyika* people of *Manicaland Province*; *ngororombe* and *mbende* of the *ZeZuru* and *Buja* of *Mashonaland East Province*; *mhande*, *mbakumba* and *chinyambera* found among the *Karanga* of *Masvingo and Midlands Provinces*; *Tsotsa* and *Chinyamusasure* of *Mashonaland West Province*. The *Midlands Province* has mixed styles with both *Ndebele* and *Shona* influences.

Most groups use hand rattles but there are various leg rattles between the *Karanga*, *ZeZuru*, and *Ndebele* people. Even the shapes of drums differ from group to group. For example, *mitumba* drums are mostly found among the *Korekore* and *Manyika* people. They are played together with small drums in an ensemble of up to eight drummers such as *indandanda* and *kwinimbira* of *Korekore* and *Buja* people. *Mbira* playing traditions are more associated with the *ZeZuru*, *Karanga* and *Korekore* cultures. However there are other *mbira* varieties found around the country.

*Mbira* is both an instrument and a music style. *Mbira* the instrument is made of metal keys fastened to a wooden soundboard. Spring wire is mostly used to make the keys, which are heated, flattened by hammering and shaped to allow vibration. The longer the key, the lower the pitch it makes and vice versa.

During the colonial era, some families maintained their musical playing traditions both in rural and urban centres but at a small scale. The formation of the National Dance Company of Zimbabwe at independence was an inspired innovation, which helped to resurrect suppressed performance of dances before it fell victim to an ideological shift by the state.

Currently, there are other institutions that have kept traditional music alive. These include professional dance groups, the Zimbabwe College of Music, Children's Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO), universities, teachers' colleges and some primary and secondary schools. These music genres have the capacity to provide effective examples in the classroom.

### **Eclectic Pedagogy**

African traditional music and performance practices have been passed on from generation to generation, through oral and aural means. Demorest (2008, p. 40) established that, ... wherever in the world music is made, it is experienced aurally, it is learnt wholly or partly by ear. This practice has proved to be effective; hence the survival of all the music today. Wade (2004, p.10) earlier declared that, Whether the music being taught and learned is preserved in notation or not, oral and aural means remain central to the discovery of essential features of song or instrumental piece.

The same observation is made by Shelemey (2000) who noted that, "Africans transmitted most of their musics orally" (p. 24). Teaching African children in both rural and urban Zimbabwe, I noted that children find oral learning less strenuous and stressful. Their retention is faster since they are familiar with that form of traditional learning. Visual media helps learners to remember words to songs. Oral and aural ways of teaching music are even more effective when used with the following methods.

Emile Jaques Dalcroze (1865-1950) was a music educator from Switzerland who developed a method that was effective in teaching rhythm. Eurhythmics was Dalcroze's major approach to teaching. Landis and Cader (1972) explain that eurhythmics is musical movement. Carrying out eurhythmics is not supposed to be dance, but elements of dance reduced to the simplest form to allow learners to understand rhythm. With this approach teachers in Zimbabwe can modify traditional dances to classroom movements in teaching rhythm. The Dalcroze method uses solfège to develop the musical ear, improvisation and to allow free invention in the music making and learning process. In his class exercises he aimed to develop inner hearing, sharpened learners' perception leading to development of articulation, timing, tone quality and phrasing (Mead, 1996). Solfège is the use of sol-fa notation in singing. As is the case with oral transmission, Dalcroze's method included singing, ear training, harmony, and counterpoint in vocal and instrumental ensembles as emphasized by Landis and Cader (1972), who are some of the key proponents of an eclectic approach in teaching music. In this teaching approach, Dalcroze calls for the use of piano. That is a challenge to Zimbabwean schools, where pianos are not easily accessible; instead teachers can use alternative instruments such as marimba or mbira as long as they can accompany children's singing and enhance the learning process. Those schools that have access to pianos are at liberty to use them. Dalcroze preferred using music from the culture orally for he believed that writing it down made it lose its spontaneity. The Dalcroze method will work well if used together with oral tradition.

Choksy (1981) declares that Kodaly's approach is a life-permeating philosophy of music education and the pedagogical principles make up the method. Like oral tradition and the Dalcroze approach, the Kodaly approach is meant to develop musical literacy. Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967) was a Hungarian ethnomusicologist, composer and educator who encouraged the use of the natural instrument that is the voice, in singing and learning activities. Developing a musical ear was one of the major areas of his approach. The Kodaly approach encouraged the use of examples from the mother tongue (Landis and Cader, 1972 and Choksy, 1981). He insisted that musical examples had to be of the highest quality. Kodaly adopted the Curwen hand signs, modified and made them an essential part of his approaches (Choksy, 1981). While Solfège is alien to oral cultures, its use in these cultures will help learners to understand pitch differences in their traditional music. Applying the hand signs in the Zimbabwean context will further enrich learners and make them more musically universal.

The last approach is Orff's *Schulwerk*. Carl Orff (1895-1982) was a German composer and music educator. He was a major proponent of simple concepts and songs. This method agrees with Kodaly's premise that musical examples should be of high quality. A good teacher is the one who possesses the organizational qualities to research for such songs. Orff also agreed with Dalcroze in the teaching of rhythm. The focus of the Orff method is the use of special instruments. Landis and Cader (1972) described the range of instruments as soprano, alto and bass xylophone, metallophones, and/or glockenspiel. They are all played using mallets. These instruments seem to have inspired Kwanongoma College innovators to develop the Zimbabwean marimba for the classroom. Improvisation is common to all methods, allowing learners to come up with their own ideas during the music making and learning process.

## Method

### Design

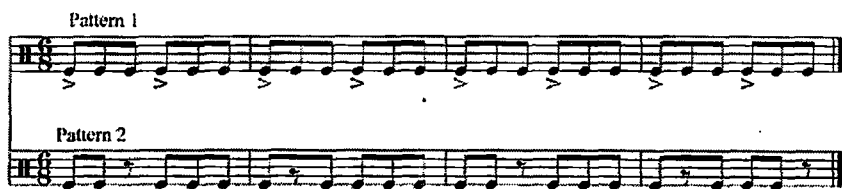
A case study design was used to find the extent to which musical literacy is understood in Zimbabwean schools.

### Procedure

In this study, an experiment using a multicultural curriculum in music was conducted. Four primary schools, two from urban areas and two from rural areas where music is taught were identified. Each school was asked to provide ten male and ten female grade 5 students. The children were exposed to various musical sounds that help them to be receptive of other types of music. The students were then exposed to the various world musical cultures that have equally complex music as their own. They were then given musical transcriptions in order to interpret the musical meanings and to undertake score reading in the song *Gotokoto* (see figures A and B). (Transcription is a sub category of notation. In Euro-American classical studies, transcription refers to copying of a musical work, usually with some change to notation... It may also mean an arrangement especially one involving a change of medium (e.g. from orchestra to piano).

Figure A

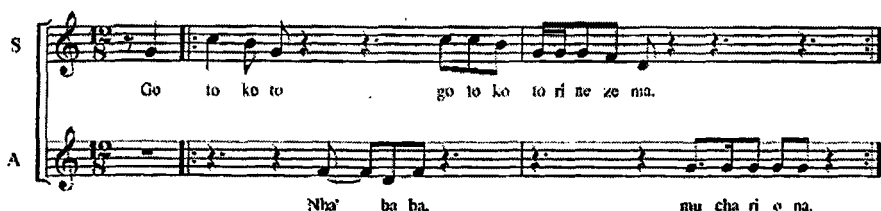
### Mhande Drumming



The drum score above applies to all songs in the *mhande* style. One drummer plays drum pattern 1, and the second drummer plays drum pattern 2. Drum pattern 2 plays the rhythm for basic *mhande* dance movement of the feet. Transcribed scores appear first before examples of suggested skills and activities.

Figure B

### Gotokoto



## Results

Although the chosen schools were being taught musical skills for two years, the above study showed that none of the forty pupils in the experiment were able to transcribe the above music. This means that musical literacy is lacking in the above schools. There

could be several reasons behind this phenomenon. Either the schools do not take music seriously or the teachers are not competent to teach it. There is therefore a great need to improve the music curriculum in schools as well as multicultural education.

Considering that the *Shona* people of Zimbabwe are made up of different ethnic groups, it is fair to have a multicultural music curriculum that promotes diversity. Apart from the *Shona* ethnic group there are also other ethnic groups which consists of Ndebeles, Whites, Asians, *Kalangas* and additional immigrants who came to Zimbabwe during the colonial era to work in the mines and on the railways. They brought various styles of music from their countries of origin contributing to a unique blend of cultures. Such a situation demands a culturally diverse curriculum and pedagogies.

### Conclusion

Zimbabwean music education curriculum as a paradigm has to be re-designed to include concepts from traditional music. It has to be modelled to teach both students and teachers music theory, sight reading, instruments both traditional and Western including performance techniques. Traditional music has to be a significant reservoir of music examples. The teaching approaches discussed can be effective if they are used together to form an eclectic pedagogy. Where there is no perfect method, getting the best ideas from each approach allows creativity. Teachers' colleges remain the mainstay towards music literacy in Zimbabwe. They prepare teachers for the classroom and this is the grassroots where curriculum innovation has to start. In its current state music education in Zimbabwe remains a redundant affair with little literacy to show. Music education is a microcosm of Zimbabwean culture and an inclusive curriculum will see Zimbabwean music not only succeeding in Zimbabwe but internationally. Teachers' colleges hold the reigns towards curriculum innovation and music literacy in the country.

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